2: Hockings E-4,5 (1962-1977) 1980
AW50 Badaga AW50

the society as unfit for interaction. If the population of the undivided Badaga community in 1871 was just under twenty thousand, then there has scarcely been any growth in *scale* when we consider that today this would still be about the order of people with whom a Badaga could potentially interact *within* one of the several factions which divide the current community of over a hundred thousand (cf. Appendix 2, p. 249).

Health Improvements and Economic Growth

The hazards of famine and epidemic disease which confronted Badagas in the nineteenth century have posed less of a problem in the twentieth. The young generation has never known starvation. Standards of health have much improved and public health facilities, especially mass inoculations, have decimated the earlier scourges. Even the modern practice of piping water into the villages has caused a vast improvement in health (Grigg, 1880, 185, n. 2; Hockings, 1979b, 10–15).

The development of a mixed cash-crop farming economy and slight industrialization from the time of the First World War have been crucial factors in the improvement of Badaga living conditions. While there are still many families that are landless or very poor, the opportunities for earning cash are so much wider than they were a century ago that general famine is not a severe or recurrent threat any more.

Education, too, has broadened the Badagas' view of society and is now very popular with them. As early as 1887 it was noted that they had themselves built six schools out of village funds.[20]

The community thus managed to overcome the social and economic difficulties which, if not ameliorated, have often triggered some kind of revitalization movement.[21] There was no successful revitalization among the Badagas even though several small and localized cults showed some potential. Instead the people were able to survive their period of frustration, accept the existence of a separate Christian community and shift from subsistence to a cash-crop economy that allowed them to improve their standard of living significantly even though the ratio of people to farm-land was rapidly increasing. Thus we can say that while the society is in no sense static today it has managed to

177 Until the end of the last century Badagas sedulously avoided the British
178 legal system and its officers. The traditional Badaga system, which we described
earlier (pp. 29-43), continued to operate effectively. In the following chapter we
121 shall describe the social change which came about during the present century when
Badagas were obliged to adapt their legal system so as to make use of the official
Indian one too.

657 Local government under the British was in practice confined for the most
(631) part to the municipalities. Some police stations were established in rural areas,
(625) and local roads were constructed; but in general there was little attempt to im-
prove the lot of the Badagas. In a few villages the presence of free mission
(871) schools from 1857 onward nevertheless did much to raise the standard of educa-
tion (cf. Grigg 1880: 423-26).

After independence, on the other hand, the Indian government began to pay a great deal of attention to developing the rural sector of the country. The Nilgiris was not selected for inclusion in the areas subjected to intensive community development in the early 1950's, but local panchayat offices were set up in the administrative "villages" of the Nilgiris, and began the dissemination of information and the improvement of basic services. The Badagas were classified as a "Backward Class" and received special help in these matters from the Harijan
(312) Welfare Department. Today most villages, as a result of these efforts, have a
(491) fairly hygienic supply of running tap-water, a track connecting them with the main
(365) roads, and an electricity supply. Many villages have started their own coopera-
(474) tive society, through which they get loans and agricultural supplies against the
security of their lands or houses.

177 Certain pieces of legislation often regarded as milestones in the recent

231 caused some rearers of livestock to start keeping compost pits. In
654 each hamlet or village there is usually a grassy clearing or raised
368 platform where male representatives meet and Badagas gather to chit-
chat. A large tree (often a Ficus sp.) may shade this meeting place.
312 Some Badaga women still must fetch water from nearby springs or
streams, but many Badaga hamlets and villages now have water piped to
368 faucets set near house-rows. A burial-cremation center is within easy
walking distance from each Badaga community. Most Badaga communities
491 have roads running to or through them, and a fair number of these
363 roads are asphalted. Scheduled buses run over some roads, and a few
494 Badagas now drive individually or jointly owned cars, buses, station
493 wagons, and trucks.

Houses. Prior to 1840 the Badagas lived in a house type with
175 front porches and two rooms separated by a wall with a door. A small
342 front door led into one room, and there was a fireplace in the other
[350 darker room. Thatched roofs were supported by posts, and walls made
(824 with bamboos or reeds woven between the posts were then daubed. How-
(333 ever, some houses had clay and stone walls (Harkness 1832: 36; Birch
1838: 103; Hough 1829: 89). According to data obtained by Jagor
342 (1876: 193-194), each thatched clay and stone house in an examined
house-row had an entranceway leading on the right to a front room.
This room had a right side storage platform and a mortar built into
the floor on the left. From the front room a door led to a bathroom
extending the full width of the house, and another door led to a
(354 kitchen paralleling the front room. The fireplace for cooking was

243 (221) (492) fields. A single plow, usually pulled by two buffaloes, may be drawn back and forth over a field. At irregular intervals of days or even weeks the field will be replowed until it has been plowed four to six times, with former plow lines being crossed at each replowing. If several buffalo teams are available, plowing may be speeded by teams (312) working simultaneously in a single file. Dikes to retain rainwater must also be rebuilt or repaired with the aid of hoes (Figure 15), and at least the final plowing is performed in fields well soaked by (401) rainwater backed up behind the dikes. Drawn harrows aid in the leveling and mixing of soil. Puddlers are lastly used to flatten and smooth surfaces about to receive rice seeds. Prior to broadcasting, the seeds are usually mixed in a cowdung wash and left sitting for several days in a small heap covered with leaves. Broadcast seeds stick in mud and there take root. Plants may remain untouched until harvesting, but most seeds take root in selected nursery fields from which plants are later pulled up and transplanted.

(221) Because seeds are planted on nursery fields from April into June, the transplanting period extends from June into August. It is during this period that most fields are plowed, harrowed, and puddled (Plate XII, E). In addition to supplemental dung fertilizer deposited on the fields, green leaves are trampled into the mud by the feet of (462) humans and livestock. Field preparation is men's work, but only women transplant young rice plants. The young plants, pulled up after approximately 40 days, are tied into bundles. By twisting off plant tops, each bundle top is flattened. Bundles carried to prepared fields are broken up individually as a field is planted. Two or three plants